



**PHYSICAL THERAPY BOARD OF CALIFORNIA**  
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## **WHAT ARE THE LAWS AND REGULATIONS GOVERNING PHYSICAL THERAPIST LICENSE APPLICANT STATUS?**

### **1399.10. Supervision of Physical Therapist License Applicant**

Pursuant to Section 2639 of the code, a physical therapy license applicant whose application for registration has been filed and reviewed by the committee may perform as a physical therapist if he or she is under the direct and immediate supervision of a physical therapist licensed by the board. "Direct and immediate supervision" means a supervisor shall at all times be responsible for and provide adequate supervision of the work performed by the graduate and shall be in close proximity to the location where the graduate is rendering physical therapy treatment.

### **2636.5. Reciprocity Applicant**

- (a) An applicant may be issued a license without a written examination if he or she meets all of the following:
  - (1) He or she is at the time of application licensed or registered as a physical therapist in a state, district, or territory of the United States having, in the opinion of the board, requirements for licensing or registration equal to or higher than those in California, and he or she has passed, to the satisfaction of the board, an examination for licensing or registration that is, in the opinion of the board, comparable to the examination used in this state.
  - (2) He or she is a graduate of a physical therapist education program approved by the board, or has met the requirements of Section 2653.
  - (3) He or she files an application as provided in Section 2632 and meets the requirements prescribed by Sections 2635 and 2650.
- (b) An applicant for licensure under subdivision (a), whose application is based on a certificate issued by a physical therapy licensing authority of another state may be required to pass an oral examination given by the board and file a statement of past work activity.
- (c) An applicant who has filed a physical therapy application under this section with the committee may, between the date of receipt of notice that his or her application is on file and the date of receipt of his or her license, perform as a physical therapist under the direct and immediate supervision of a physical therapist licensed in this state.

During this period the applicant shall identify himself or herself only as a "physical therapist license applicant."

If the applicant under this section does not qualify and receive a license as provided in this section and does not qualify under Section 2639 all privileges under this section shall terminate upon notice by certified mail, return receipt requested. An applicant may only qualify once to perform as a physical therapist license applicant.

### **2639. Graduate Practice**

Every graduate of an approved physical therapist education program who has filed a complete application for licensure with the board for the first time may, following receipt of a letter of authorization to perform as a "physical therapist license applicant," perform as a physical therapist under the direct and immediate supervision of a physical therapist licensed in this state pending the results of the first licensing examination administered for which he or she is eligible following

graduation from an approved physical therapist education program. During this period the applicant shall identify himself or herself only as a "physical therapist license applicant." If the applicant passes the examination, the physical therapist license applicant status shall remain in effect until a regular renewable license is issued, or licensure is denied, by the committee. If the applicant fails the licensing examination, or if he or she passes the examination but licensure is denied, the applicant shall be prohibited from performing as a physical therapist license applicant at any time in the future.

A person shall not be considered a graduate unless he or she has successfully completed all the clinical training and internships required for graduation from the program.

If the applicant fails to take the next succeeding examination without due cause or fails to pass the examination or receive a license, all privileges under this section shall terminate upon notice by certified mail, return receipt requested. An applicant may only qualify once to perform as a physical therapist license applicant.

### **2653. Applicants From Foreign Schools**

- (a) An applicant for a license as a physical therapist who was issued a diploma by a physical therapist educational program that is not an approved program and is not located in the United States shall meet all of the following requirements in order to be licensed as a physical therapist:
  - (1) Furnish documentary evidence satisfactory to the committee, that he or she has completed the equivalent professional degree to that issued by a United States accredited physical therapist education program in a physical therapist education program that entitles the applicant to practice as a physical therapist in the country where the diploma was issued. The physical therapy education received by the applicant shall meet the criteria set forth in subdivision (b) and © of Section 2650. The committee may require an applicant to submit documentation of his or her education to a credentials evaluation service for review and a report to the committee.
  - (2) Pass the written examination required by Section 2636. The requirements to pass the written examination shall not apply to an applicant who at the time of application has passed, to the satisfaction of the committee, an examination for licensure in another state, district, or territory of the United States, that is, in the opinion of the committee, comparable to the examination given in this state.
  - (3) Complete a period of clinical service under the direct and immediate supervision of a physical therapist licensed by the board which does not exceed nine months in a location approved by the committee, in a manner satisfactory to the committee. The applicant shall have passed the written examination required in subdivision (b) prior to commencing the period of clinical service. The committee shall require the supervising physical therapist to evaluate the applicant and report his or her findings to the committee. The committee may in its discretion waive all or part of the required clinical service pursuant to guidelines set forth in its regulations. During the period of clinical service until he or she is issued a license as a physical therapist by the committee, the applicant shall be identified as a "physical therapist license applicant."
  - (4) An applicant for licensure under this subdivision, whose application is based on a certificate issued by a physical therapist licensing authority of another state, may be required to pass an oral examination given by the committee, and to file a statement of past work activity.
- (b) Nothing contained in this section shall prohibit the committee from disapproving any foreign physical therapist education program or from denying the applicant if, in the opinion of the committee, the instruction received by the applicant or the courses were not equivalent to that required by this chapter. If the applicant does not qualify to take the physical therapist examination, his or her education may be evaluated and the applicant may be eligible to take the physical therapist assistant examination.